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U.S. WEATHER BUREAU

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Information Relative To the Investigation

Of the Influence Of Climate on Health

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U. S. Weather Bureau.

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Circular No 4. Sanitary Climatology.

INFORMATION RELATIVE

TO THE

INVESTIGATION OF THE INFLUENCE

OF


CLIMATE ON HEALTH.

ERRATA.

Page 2, third line from bottom, for “kind ” read “kinds.”

Page 7, fifth line from top, for “as” read “of.”

Page 7, third line from bottom, for “profession ” read “professions.”



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Circular No. 4. Sanitary Climatology.

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,
WEATHER BUREAU,

Washington, D. C., March 23, 1895.

INFORMATION RELATIVE TO THE INVESTIGATION OF THE
INFLUENCE OF CLIMATE ON HEALTH.

The investigation of the influence of climate on health that has been undertaken by the Weather Bureau was first made public by the issuing of a circular, of which the following is a reprint :

Circular No. 1. Sanitary Climatology.

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, WEATHER BUREAU,
Washington, D. C., January 2, 1895.

The interest manifested by every class of people in the subject of climate and its influence on health and disease has determined the Honorable the Secretary of Agriculture, through the medium of the Weather Bureau, to undertake the systematic investigation of the subject.

It is hoped to make the proposed investigation of interest and value to all, but especially to the medical and sanitary professions, and to the large number of persons who seek, by visitation of health resorts and change of climate, either to restore health or prolong lives incurably affected or to ward off threatened disease.

The study of the climates of the country in connection with the indigenous diseases should be of material service to every community, in showing to what degree local climatic peculiarities may favor or combat the development of the different diseases, and by suggesting, in many instances, supplementary sanitary precautions; also by indicating to what parts of the country invalids and health seekers may be sent to find climatic surroundings best adapted to the alleviation or cure of their particular cases.

The hearty cooperation of the various boards of health, public sanitary authorities, sanitary associations and societies, and of physicians who may feel an interest in the work, is asked to achieve and perfect the aims of this investigation.

No compensation can be offered for this cooperation other than to send, free of cost, the publications of the Bureau bearing upon climatology and its relation to health and disease to all those who assist in the work.

Cooperation will consist in sending to this office reports of vital statistics from the various localities. That these reports may be of value, it is evident to all that they should be accurate and complete, and be rendered promptly and regularly. Blank forms of reports have been prepared so as to occasion as little trouble and labor as possible on the part of the reporter, and will be furnished by the Bureau on application.

At the very beginning of the investigation it is not possible to outline precisely the channels through which the results obtained will be made public, but it is hoped to publish soon a periodical devoted to climatology and its relations to health and disease. The publication will probably resemble in size and general appearance the present Monthly Weather Review, the subject matter being, of course, different.

More detailed information will be furnished on application.

MARK W. HARRINGTON,
Chief of Bureau.

This circular was printed either in full or in abstract in the leading journals of the medical and general newspaper press.

The methods and details to be pursued in gathering together the data required for the investigation had not been matured when the circular was published, and its purpose was mainly to elicit suggestions and to gain some tangible estimate of the extent of the statistics and of the number of cooperators that could probably be expected. At the same time, letters were addressed to the various officials of this Bureau, scattered throughout the country, asking them to ascertain the methods of recording and reporting vital statistics in vogue in their respective localities. From the information obtained by these means the plan and details of the work have been determined so far as the possibilities of an untried experiment will permit.

The investigation of the relation and application of climatic agencies to hygienic conditions requires the collection and collation of the essential facts of both meteorology and hygiene. While the Bureau will obtain the necessary climatic data from the records of its various meteorologic stations, it must look to the voluntary assistance of the medical and sanitary professions for the statistics of mortality and morbidity; and the ultimate value of the investigation will depend in a great degree upon the interest these professions take in the enterprise.

VITAL STATISTICS.

Wherever it is practicable, the mortality and morbidity statistics will be collected by weekly periods.

The kind of facts that are desired relative to mortality and the shape in which they are asked to be returned will appear from the following copy of the blank form prepared for the purpose:

Form No. 5001.—S. C.

U. S. Department of Agriculture,
WEATHER BUREAU.

Report of deaths in
for the week ending , 189 ..

CAUSE OF DEATH.	Color.	DAYS OF WEEK.							TOTAL.
		S.	M.	T.	W.	T.	F.	S.	
Bronchitis	W.								
	C.								
Consumption	W.								
	C.								
Croup	W.								
	C.								
Diphtheria	W.								
	C.								
Erysipelas	W.								
	C.								
Heart disease (organic)	W.								
	C.								
Influenza	W.								
	C.								
Intermittent fever	W.								
	C.								
Intestines, inflam- mation of	W.								
	C.								
Kidneys, inflam- mation of	W.								
	C.								
Measles	W.								
	C.								
Pneumonia	W.								
	C.								
Rheumatism	W.								
	C.								
Scarlet fever	W.								
	C.								
Smallpox	W.								
	C.								
Suicide	W.								
	C.								
Typhoid fever	W.								
	C.								
Whooping cough.	W.								
	C.								
	W.								
	C.								
	W.								
	C.								
Other causes	W.								
	C.								
All causes	W.								
	C.								

(OVER.)

Report of Deaths in

DEATHS BY AGES AND SEX.	Color.	DAYS OF WEEK.							TOTAL.
		S.	M.	T.	W.	T.	F.	S.	
Under 1 year ----	W.								
	C.								
1 to 5 years.	W.								
	C.								
60 years and over.	W.								
	C.								
Males.	W.								
	C.								
Females.	W.								
	C.								
CONTAGIOUS DISEASES REPORTED.									
Scarlet fever ----	W.								
	C.								
Diphtheria ----	W.								
	C.								
	W.								
	C.								
	W.								
	C.								
	W.								
	C.								

Estimated population

Death rate per annum per 1,000

Total number of births during the week

(Signature), M. D.

REMARKS.

This form is designed for the use of Boards of Health and Health Officers in returning the deaths occurring in their respective municipalities, districts, and States during any calendar week. Provision is also made thereon for reporting such diseases as may be registered as dangerous to public health.

The following suggestions to be observed in making out the foregoing form are submitted to secure uniformity, so essential to all statistical work:

1. The number of deaths from each cause or group of causes thereon named should be entered for each day; the white mortality in the line opposite the letter "W," and the colored (negro) mortality opposite the letter "C."

2. The caption "Intestines, inflammation of" is intended to include those diseases of the gastro-enteric canal characterized by acute or chronic inflammation, such as are variously classed under the headings, enteritis, gastro-enteritis, diarrhea, dysentery, cholera morbus, etc.

3. The caption "Kidneys, inflammation of" is intended to include acute and chronic Bright's Disease and acute and chronic nephritis.

4. The number of deaths of visitors from each cause or group of causes should be stated, especially for those localities that are frequented as health resorts; for it is obviously unfair to attribute deaths of valetudinarians to the community in which they may chance to be visiting at the time of death.

5. Blank spaces are left for the names of any other diseases that may have caused a mortality to such a degree as, in the judgment of the reporter, to be deserving of notice.

6. Under the heading "Contagious diseases reported" the number of cases (not deaths) reported should be entered. As the diseases considered as "notifiable" differ in different localities, the spaces are left blank, with the exception of "Scarlet fever" and "Diphtheria," two diseases regarded as specially contagious in every locality.

7. Under "Remarks," such elements and conditions of weather should be noted as, in the opinion of the observer, may have had an influence upon the sanitary conditions of the locality.

8. If it should not be convenient to give the deaths day by day, the total for the week will be acceptable.

9. Official envelopes, addressed to the Chief of Weather Bureau, are furnished for mailing these forms. These envelopes require no stamps, being transmitted free through the mails.

10. Whenever the supply of either blanks or envelopes is exhausted, a new supply will be sent on receiving notification.

The Bureau appreciates the difficulties under which many of the public health authorities labor as regards clerical force and incompleteness of returns, and does not wish it to be inferred, because the reports can not be made as complete as the blank provides for, that less complete statistics will not be of use.

Form No. 5002—S. C., of which the following is a copy, provides for morbidity statistics, and is intended for the individual physician to use in reporting the presence in his practice, and consequently in his locality, of the diseases named thereon.

Form No. 5002.—S. C.

**U. S. Department of Agriculture,
WEATHER BUREAU.**

SICKNESS STATISTICS FOR USE IN SANITARY CLIMATOLOGY.

(Name of Place)

Week ending, Sat.,, 189 .

DISEASES.	PREVA- LENCE.	REMARKS:-
Asthma	○	
Bronchitis	○	
Catarrh (a)	○	
Consumption	○	
Croup	○	
Diphtheria	○	
Erysipelas	○	
Heart Disease (Organic)	○	
Influenza	○	
Intermittent Fever	○	
Intestines, Inflammation of (b)	○	
Kidneys, Inflammation of (b)	○	
Measles	○	
Neuralgia	○	
Pneumonia	○	
Rheumatism	○	
Scarlet Fever	○	
Typhoid (Enteric) Fever	○	
Whooping Cough	○	
.....	○	
.....	○	
.....	○	
.....	○	

EXPLANATION: Please indicate the prevalence of a disease by drawing a mark through circle, thus: Bronchitis ⊙, signifies the presence of bronchitis; Asthma ○, that no case of asthma was present.

(a) To include acute rhinitis, tonsillitis, and pharyngitis.

(b) To include all diseased conditions of the viscera characterized by acute inflammation.

....., M. D.

~~Q2~~ Please be sure to date.

The explanation printed thereon shows how it is to be used. This form should be mailed without cover, being treated as an ordinary postal card, and requires no postage for transmission through the mails.

Cooperators will be supplied with penalty envelopes to be used in corresponding with the Bureau upon official matters, as in asking for supplies or information necessary to their assistance in the investigation; and cooperators are requested to anticipate by timely notification the exhaustion of their supplies.

The Bureau requests that cooperators will forward their reports as soon after the end of the week as convenient, to the end that the statistics may be received in time to afford ample opportunity for compilation and publication while the events are still fresh enough to be recalled by either the general reader or the student of medical climatology.

COMPILATION.

The vital and meteorologic statistics, having been received, will be collated by general averages and by particular and selected events, as the comparison of the general mortality with the average conditions of the weather for the week, and the passage of storms and cold or hot waves, the appearance of epidemics, etc. Also, in instances as well-defined weather disturbances, comparisons of vital and meteorologic statistics will be made by daily periods. For example, a storm appearing in the western part of the country will be followed day by day as it passes eastward across the country, and the illness and deaths reported for these days from the localities traversed will be compiled and compared with the same kind of facts reported both before and after the storm. The same plan of treatment will be pursued in dealing with hot and cold waves.

By these methods we may hope to be able to give, in time, definite information as to how much and how the accidental and constant variations of the weather affect the sick and well, and in what way the present forecasts and weather charts can be used in both curative and preventive medicine.

The calendar week has been adopted as the period of time for collecting statistics and making the general comparison; because in longer periods, for instance a month, the evidence of extreme fluctuations in either the meteorologic or sanitary conditions is more or less smoothed out in proportion to the length of time during which the events happened. Also, because it has the advantage over other short arbitrary periods in being familiar to all, and one by which so many of our ordinary events and actions are reckoned.

THE PUBLICATION.

A publication containing the collected and compiled facts will be issued monthly. This publication will comprise, in the shape of tables, charts and diagrams, the chief meteorologic factors as observed and recorded by the officials of the Weather Bureau, and the statistics of mortality and morbidity as reported by the various public health officials and by individual physicians; also brief statements of the general sanitary conditions of the different localities, especially as they may have been influenced by the weather.

Under no circumstances will discriminating or advisory notices of any locality be published. The entire aim of the Bureau being to collect the facts and statistics for the sanitary and medical profession, and for the general public, to use in such ways and for such purposes as they may see fit.

MARK W. HARRINGTON,

Chief of Bureau.

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U.S.Weather bureau

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